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The properties of the ellipse, hyperbola and parabola, as deduced from their special equations, follow in natural order, together with the properties of foci and directrices and the identification of curves of second order with conic sections. The remainder of the book is marked for omission on first reading, and includes work of a more general and modern character, such as pole and polar, tangential, homogeneous, and trilinear coördinates, projective properties, etc.

It seems to me that this translation is likely to prove a useful one by furnishing the higher colleges with a course that is not so severe as Salmon's, and yet better than any that is now given in which Salmon's books are not used.

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*A History of American Literature.* By FRED LEWIS PATTEE, Pennsylvania State College. Boston: Silver, Burdette & Co.

THE plan of Professor Pattee's volume is wholly to be commended. He has prepared a text-book that will scarcely be welcome to indolent or unaspiring instructors, and in so far is a public benefactor. The class in literature is yet, in many high schools, but a resting time between sterner tasks, while the teacher, sitting back and reading the pages of the lesson, perhaps for the first time, hears his class recite. Anything that helps the passing of this sort of pedagogy is to be praised. The book is hardly more than an outline, and of the sort that cannot be put into class use without supplemental reading. Even the biographic paragraphs cannot, in general, be treated as available matter for "recitation" until reinforced by references. The first thing given under each new topic is a list of authorities, after which, in succinct subordination, is the author's summary. The matter is so arranged that schools without libraries can make shift to do the work, as the author intended, by proper methods.

The full title of the work, *A History of American Literature, with a View to the Fundamental Principles Underlying its Development*, gives further intimation as to the author's purposes. Here is a rather hazardous obligation to assume. Not that professors and teachers of literature are so well advised as to what the principles underlying even general literary development really are, for the contrary is true; but they will be all the more exacting critics. It would be hardly true to

say that Professor Pattee has brought to light the principles evinced in the history of our literature. "To study American literature philosophically," he observes, "one must go back to the beginnings of the language in which it is written. A study of the literature and the intellectual development of England through the Elizabethan age should precede the thorough study of the American writers. This portion of English history is held in common by both nations. The elements of race and environment, as they affected our English ancestors, must be fully understood in order for us to appreciate the character and spirit of the founders of our nation. We must weigh the great events of British history and their influence upon the development of the English race. We must acquaint ourselves with the history and development of English thought and language; with the great minds that have shaped and moulded these from Cædmon to Shakespeare. This done, we have mastered Book I of the *History of American Thought and Literature*." All this is true, while hardly practicable before such study as this book is designed to guide, but if done would not ensure much comprehension of what either English or American literature means. We are a strong people, and descended from a mighty ancestry, but nobody should be left to infer that as the reason why we can claim as ours at least two of the greatest writers of all time. English literature is chief among the literatures of the earth only because it has revealed more of wisdom and truth to men than any other. No teaching of English literature is worthy of the name until it has made or enabled all pupils to see for themselves the transcendent genius and worth of Shakespeare. No teaching of American literature is worthy of its opportunity that does not, philosophically or otherwise, show the beauty and cunning of Hawthorne's hand, and make the meaning and the power of Emerson's seership felt. These twain are yet the glory of the new world.

There are some things in this book that make one restive as he reads. There are such signs of carelessness, or worse, as Guttenberg, and Edmund Spencer. We find (p. 3), "Beowulf, a terrible tale of war and carnage." The *Beowulf* is, of course, an epic that celebrates the slaying of three demons, and is far less truculent in spirit and matter than, we will say, Charles Kingsley's *Hereward*. In discussing what American literature is, the author begins with these sentences: "The term 'a literature' may be defined as 'all the literary productions in a given language.' By this definition (*sic*) English literature

would embrace all the writings [not 'literary' this time] that have emanated from the race speaking the English language." The good and sufficient reasons why American literature is a thing distinct are not given with much clearness, and will be missed by many learners. There are some remarks on realism that will hardly help the average student. Why not say that realism as an art is the ability to paint common experiences so that we almost mistake them for our own? The romancer paints life in the large so that we can imagine ourselves the hero in the case. Realism discovers to us the heroism in our own lives, if there is any, or shows us how there may be much.

To sum up, this is a gratefully good book, and will be helpful to all good teachers.

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*Methods of Mind Training.* By CATHERINE AIKEN. Harper & Bro.

IN a number of respects this little book is unique; it sets forth in a clear and interesting way a series of exercises that are capable of producing very remarkable results. In fact, some of the achievements astound us, and we are almost incredulous. But the testimony is so strong that we must believe, though we are not able to understand. The author holds that, comparatively speaking, our schools have not been doing efficient service, they have not economized properly the pupils' efforts, and have produced results far too meager for the faithfulness, intelligence, and energy employed. New working principles, new means, and new methods seem desirable. With this point of view most teachers who have thought over the matter, will find themselves in fullest accord.

From this situation the author sought a relief and the result of her inquiry is the proposed "means of saving the pupil a vast amount of mental drudgery and fatigue." She sets forth a series of illustrative exercises woven somewhat into a "system which may be characterized as a means to an end." In this very laudable effort the author disclaims to have produced "a psychological treatise." However, it is obvious that she adheres very closely to a certain psychological view, and her work is a sound and consistent interpretation and application of this view. Her studies have consisted mainly of experiments in